

feeling towards him or any other gentleman upon this floor. The chair is indebted to the gentleman for giving him the opportunity of saying so.

Mr. BILLINGSLEY. I assure the president that, so far as I am concerned, I conceive that he discharged his duties as the presiding officer of this body, and protected me in every right that belongs to me as a member of this convention.

Mr. BARRON. I suppose an explanation is due from me. I find that the dignity of the chivalry is very much touched if a man objects to being called a robber by them. I do not know that they pay their honest debts any better than I do. When the gentleman from St. Mary's (Mr. Billingsley) said we had robbed him of his property, to whom was he talking? To this convention; to you, and to me. "You have robbed us of our property." I rose to a point of order, not out of any disrespect towards him. In the few humble remarks I made here some time ago, I used no such language towards him. I did not say to him, "You give a negro four pounds of meat and a peck of corn meal to live on for a week, and then you pocket the proceeds of their labor, the sweat of their brow." No, sir; I kept that to myself. I did not charge them with standing up here as if they were gods with whips in their hands to lash humanity as they pleased.

But to-day it is necessary I should throw down the gauntlet, and talk the matter over plainly, and not handle it with gloved hands. Think how great they are! Are they any more than men? The blood in my veins is just as good as the blood in theirs. And no man on this floor, independent of you, Mr. President, shall ever charge me with being a robber without my noticing it.

And what occurred in less than thirty minutes afterwards? Because I called the previous question, without desiring to be heard upon this question myself, I was accused by the gentleman from Anne Arundel (Mr. Miller) with not having common honesty. That was modest in that gentleman certainly. I thank him for it.

Mr. MILLER. I disavow any intention to use that expression. If it escaped from me, it did so inadvertently.

Mr. BARRON. I do not care how high-born the chivalry are; as long as I stand in this convention I am the peer of the best of them here. I am to-day a man just as God made me, and that man is not in this convention, and does not tread the face of this earth, to whom I am afraid to speak my mind. With this explanation I am willing to let this matter drop.

The PRESIDENT. The chair is fully satisfied that the gentleman from St. Mary's (Mr. Billingsley) from his manner and mode of expression, and from his generally gentle-

manly deportment in this convention, did not entertain the slightest intention to reflect upon the motives of any gentleman in this convention. The chair does not believe that the gentleman from St. Mary's entertained any such sentiment. The chair has to judge by the manner in which gentlemen express themselves. What harm is it to any individual to use the word "robber" in a political sense? There is no gentleman in this convention but what has used equally as strong expressions. The attention of the gentleman from St. Mary's being called to it, he instantly disclaimed any intention to offend any gentleman in this convention. It is utterly impossible for the chair to restrain gentlemen on account of their particular modes of expression. Men have different ways of expressing themselves. I could have checked every gentleman in this convention, if I had chosen to put a literal, strict interpretation upon their words. There is not a man in this convention but what, from a strict interpretation of his language, has committed an insult to this body. It is a peculiarity attending all political debates. It is a part of the freedom of speech allowed to gentlemen for the purpose of enabling them to exercise freely and fully a right guaranteed to them under the constitution and laws of this State. If gentlemen here say that they have been robbed of their property, it does not mean that each one here who voted for that measure has participated in any such thing as is commonly understood by the term "robbery." It is spoken in a political sense. That is the only sense in which the word is used.

I checked the gentleman from Anne Arundel (Mr. Miller,) and I believe it is the second instance only in which I have been compelled to check gentlemen, on the ground that the use by him of the words "common honesty," the manner in which he used them, the apparent warmth with which he used them, indicated that he imputed improper motives to the members of this convention. It is the duty of the president of the convention to protect the rights and honor of every member here. The gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Barron) is the peer of every other man in this body. The gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers,) the gentleman from St. Mary's (Mr. Billingsley,) and the gentleman from Charles (Mr. Davis,) are equally the peers of every other man in this body. We all stand upon the same common platform, subject to those frailties that are incident to human nature. We can none of us claim any superiority over the others. It is the duty of the presiding officer to see that equal justice is meted out to every one of you, and that he will do under all circumstances and upon all occasions. And he will further say, that if any gentleman violates intentionally or knowingly the rules of this body, he will put him